

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Cherry Hill Man Indicted for Extortion in Connection With Illegal Sports Gambling Operation

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Cherry Hill man was indicted today on an extortion charge in connection with running an illegal sports gambling operation, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Vincent Filipelli, 53, was arrested on state and federal charges on Oct. 24, 2006, by members of the New Jersey State Police Organized Crime Bureau and the FBI's Philadelphia Division. Filipelli had an initial appearance on the federal Criminal Complaint before U.S. Magistrate Ann Marie Donio on Oct. 25. At the time, Judge Donio ordered Filipelli detained pending a bail hearing that was scheduled for today.

At the bail hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline Carle informed the court that a grand jury sitting in Camden had returned a one-count federal Indictment earlier this morning. Judge Donio ordered Filipelli detained pending trial, finding that he presents a danger to the community.

The Indictment charges that Filipelli knowingly traveled from New Jersey to Pennsylvania with the intent of receiving money from another individual, who had been induced to pay the money through actual and threatened force, violence and fear. The payment was allegedly for the purpose of furthering an unlawful activity, namely a gambling enterprise.

According to a federal Complaint signed on Oct. 23, 2006, an investigation of Filipelli, a Philadelphia La Cosa Nostra (LCN) Family member, began in August 2005. According to the Complaint, Filipelli was the focus of an illegal sports gambling investigation, which utilized two undercover N.J. State Police detectives. According to the Complaint, Filipelli, believing that one of the detectives was an individual who owed him a gambling debt, threatened to put the undercover detective in the hospital for a year if the debt was not paid. Filipelli also stated that he was a "made" guy in conversations with one of the undercover detectives. "Made" is a term associated with being an accepted member of the LCN organized criminal enterprise, according to the Complaint.

The charge in the Indictment carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the aggregate loss to the victims or gain to the defendants.

In determining an actual sentence, the judge to whom the case is assigned would, upon a conviction, consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Despite indictment, a defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis, and the New Jersey State Police, under the direction of Colonel Joseph R. Fuentes, Superintendent, with the investigation leading to the Indictment.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline Carle of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Donald F. Manno, Esq. Cherry Hill